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## Security needs among teachers

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### Abstract

According to the major theories of motivation, the security need is placed among the basic human necessities. The article presents a research on teachers' security needs in terms of protection. The study tries to assess important features of motivation of school and high school teachers. The focus is on security needs (or protection needs). Some correlations with other manifest or latent characteristics of the teachers were also made. The dynamics of the security needs was observed and several conclusions were drawn.

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*Keywords:* teacher, motivation, security needs

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### 1. Introduction

The relationship between teachers and the educational environment has long attracted psychologists and other behavioral scientists. Teacher personality and his motivation for work are of major importance for the educational area. The teacher has been analyzed from different angles: cognitive view (how cognitive processes support the educational process), skills view (which is the appropriate relation between teacher's skills and his specific environment), curricula view and so on.

The major task for teacher consists in arranging the learner's environment so the course of learning should be enabled, backed, reinforced, and maintained (Gagne, 1976). This way the teacher's personality becomes a major factor in the organization of the learning environment.

Humanistic psychology has been little used in analyzing the place and role of the teacher. Even less has been considered his real need. Carl Rogers sees people as motivated by a basic general trend: the tendency to update, maintain and enhance their experiences. This innate tendency is a fundamental need of human beings and includes all psychological necessities. We are referring here to the self-actualization need (Rogers, 1961).

On the other hand Abraham Maslow asserts that the human being has an innate number of needs that activate and direct the behavior. The basic needs are primary basic physiological drives and to move up a person must first meet

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these needs. Safety (or security) needs come next in the hierarchy; Maslow suggests that people need a safe, secure environment in order to function effectively (Maslow, 1970). In the educational environment this need is aimed especially at students. Teachers try various methods to encourage attitudes of leadership or decrease the need for security by different ways (Lupu 2010; Lupu 2011). What about the teachers' security need? Which are the negative implications if the security needs are not fulfilled? One of those implications consists in burnout syndrome, for instance. In the burnout domain, most previous researchers have focused on the situational stressors influencing burnout, such as excessive workload and emotionally demanding interactions (Bakker et al. 2002).

### *1.1. Purpose of the research*

The purpose of this study was to capture and measure the dynamics of motivation and especially the security needs (SN) within a group of teachers and to study if there are some correlations of the SN with other dimensions. The research was larger, trying to catch more dimensions from the teachers' motivation and personality dynamics. For this article yet we are focused on the shown items.

We defined SN not only in terms of physical security, but also economical security (the feeling of security related to money, housing and job).

## **2. Method**

### *2.1. Participants*

The study sample was formed by 53 school and high-school teachers participating in this research. The sample consisted of 47 females and 6 males aged from 21 to 53 years old ( $M=38.2317$ ). The sample gender distribution is similar to the gender distribution in Romanian teaching system.

### *2.2. Instruments*

A motivational questionnaire (MQ) was used for this research, measuring the teachers' needs, according to Maslow theory. The MQ was validated on Romanian population in 2000 and has a good internal consistency and fidelity. MQ was built based on Maslow and Herzberg theories and it is usually applied in HR area within institutions and companies.

Statistical data were collected and processed.

### *2.3. Procedure*

The instrument was administered by instructed operators, to groups of teachers, according to instructions. The subjects were told about the purpose of the research, and that the information they will provide will be secured and they are free to participate into the research.

### *2.4. Data analysis*

Statistical analysis was conducted by SPSS 16.0 and Excel. Frequencies, descriptive statistics (mean, deviation) and specific correlations were calculated

## **3. Results**

The scores frequencies related to SN for the entire teachers sample were calculated and the results are shown in the Table 1.

Table 1

| Security needs frequencies |       |           |         |               | Cumulative<br>Percent |
|----------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|-----------------------|
|                            |       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent |                       |
| Valid                      | 1,00  | 1         | 1,9     | 1,9           | 1,9                   |
|                            | 2,00  | 1         | 1,9     | 1,9           | 3,8                   |
|                            | 3,00  | 1         | 1,9     | 1,9           | 5,7                   |
|                            | 4,00  | 2         | 3,8     | 3,8           | 9,4                   |
|                            | 5,00  | 5         | 9,4     | 9,4           | 18,9                  |
|                            | 6,00  | 3         | 5,7     | 5,7           | 24,5                  |
|                            | 7,00  | 7         | 13,2    | 13,2          | 37,7                  |
|                            | 8,00  | 6         | 11,3    | 11,3          | 49,1                  |
|                            | 9,00  | 12        | 22,6    | 22,6          | 71,7                  |
|                            | 10,00 | 4         | 7,5     | 7,5           | 79,2                  |
|                            | 11,00 | 4         | 7,5     | 7,5           | 86,8                  |
|                            | 12,00 | 7         | 13,2    | 13,2          | 100,0                 |
|                            | Total | 53        | 100,0   | 100,0         |                       |

It can be observed from the Table 1 that 62.10% of the participants obtained high scores, meaning they feel insecure. We refer to the scores above 7 (scores from 8 to 12). Moreover, 13.2% of the participants feel highly insecure, obtaining the highest score (12).

In the Figure 1 we can observe the graphical representation of the increasing sores for SN.

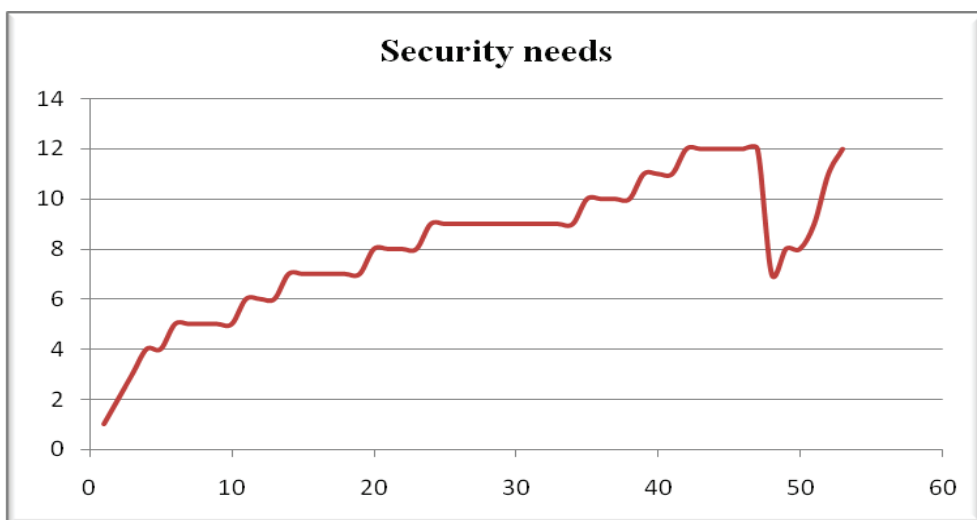


Figure 1

The frequencies by gender (even the sample is poor in men) are as follows in Table 2 (for men) and Table 3 (for women):

Table 2

| Security scores for men |       |           |         |               |                    |
|-------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|                         |       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid                   | 7,00  | 1         | 16,7    | 16,7          | 16,7               |
|                         | 8,00  | 2         | 33,3    | 33,3          | 50,0               |
|                         | 9,00  | 1         | 16,7    | 16,7          | 66,7               |
|                         | 11,00 | 1         | 16,7    | 16,7          | 83,3               |
|                         | 12,00 | 1         | 16,7    | 16,7          | 100,0              |
|                         | Total | 6         | 100,0   | 100,0         |                    |

Table 3

| Security scores for women |       |           |         |               |                    |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
|                           |       | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid                     | 1,00  | 1         | 2,1     | 2,1           | 2,1                |
|                           | 2,00  | 1         | 2,1     | 2,1           | 4,3                |
|                           | 3,00  | 1         | 2,1     | 2,1           | 6,4                |
|                           | 4,00  | 2         | 4,3     | 4,3           | 10,6               |
|                           | 5,00  | 5         | 10,6    | 10,6          | 21,3               |
|                           | 6,00  | 3         | 6,4     | 6,4           | 27,7               |
|                           | 7,00  | 6         | 12,8    | 12,8          | 40,4               |
|                           | 8,00  | 4         | 8,5     | 8,5           | 48,9               |
|                           | 9,00  | 11        | 23,4    | 23,4          | 72,3               |
|                           | 10,00 | 4         | 8,5     | 8,5           | 80,9               |
|                           | 11,00 | 3         | 6,4     | 6,4           | 87,2               |
|                           | 12,00 | 6         | 12,8    | 12,8          | 100,0              |
|                           | Total | 47        | 100,0   | 100,0         |                    |

We can observe that the scores are higher in men (starting from 7) than in women, showing higher security needs, or high insecurity feelings for male teachers.

For the entire sample the mean for SN scores is 8,113208, which shows an insecurity feeling. By gender the means can be found in the Table 4.

Table 4

| SN means and standard deviation by gender |        |    |                |
|---|--------|----|----------------|
| SECURITY                                  |        |    |                |
| GEN                                       | Mean   | N  | Std. Deviation |
| 1,00                                      | 7,9787 | 47 | 2,77794        |
| 2,00                                      | 9,1667 | 6  | 1,94079        |
| Total                                     | 8,1132 | 53 | 2,70797        |

There is also a positive correlation between SN and esteem needs (EN), the correlation coefficient being 0,574305. In Table 5 we made the T test for SN and EN

Table 5

| T-test - One-Sample Test |        |    |                 |   |        |         |
|--------------------------|--------|----|-----------------|---|--------|---------|
| Test Value = 0           |        |    |                 |   |        |         |
|                          |        |    |                 | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference |        |         |
|                          | t      | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference                           | Lower  | Upper   |
| SECURITY                 | 21,812 | 52 | ,000            | 8,11321                                   | 7,3668 | 8,8596  |
| ESTEEM                   | 32,156 | 52 | ,000            | 9,58491                                   | 8,9868 | 10,1830 |

Another positive correlation was found between SN and professional success needs (PSN): Pearson coefficient 0,303993.

All these positive correlations demonstrate the covariance of the three dimensions studied here: SN, EN and PSN.

#### 4. Discussion

The study shows that the Romanian teachers from the sample have a strong feeling of insecurity. In a changing environment (which is changing continuously for 20 years) the need for security is stronger and, according to our findings, the need for professional success and esteem are directly related to the security need.

The high scores on each scale (SN, EN and PSN) show increased needs on these dimensions. As a direct result, the higher the needs the more will be less motivation.

The scores for this dimension (SN) should be understood also in relation to age and to gender. We observed lower scores at older ages and higher scores at younger teachers. The young teacher is a starter in this profession and his expectances are higher.

Another important observation should be focused on gender. Even we had only few males in our sample, they demonstrated a higher insecurity feeling by comparison with women. This could be related to the social structure where, in the traditional way, the man should assure the security of his family (including financial security) and, as a result, he feel this as a burden and his individual insecurity level is higher.

These strong needs cover, in our opinion, a bigger necessity: the need for social support and counseling.

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